



# THE COMMUNICATOR

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## Grant County Employee Newsletter

### *In this quarter's issue...*

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**Joyce Roling**  
Personnel  
Director

### Keeping you informed with *What's new.... And What's coming...*

**Employee Handbook:** The Employee Handbook has been revised. We are very appreciative of all the signature pages returned in a timely manner. Thanks so much for taking the time to review the policies. Remember to ask your supervisor or the Personnel Office about any policies you do not understand or if you have any questions or concerns. Remember—You always have access to the Employee Handbook electronically. Here's the link <http://www.co.grant.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=2666&locid=147>

**Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA):** HRA is a well-known acronym by now. The county has provided question and answer sessions with very few participants so far. It just goes to show that all the informational meetings prior to implementation have prepared staff to efficiently handle their claims. On the other hand... maybe you haven't had any claims to deal with yet. That's okay. We will be periodically holding more sessions in the future to assist with your questions. You are also free to contact Brent Straka at TriCor 723-6441 Ext. 1113, or the Personnel Office.

**Performance Evaluations:** The county has been moving forward with training supervisors on how to do performance evaluations. Last Spring most supervisors received the training and will be implementing evaluations on staff this year. Evaluations are important because they will give staff clear guidance on expectations and address any specific concerns. All non-represented staff are required to have a performance evaluation. Some newly non-represented staff will be easing into the process. Eventually, annual performance evaluations will be required and an electronic copy will be on file in the Personnel Office.

**Wage Schedules:** The county is currently using the same wage schedules that have been included in union contracts as well as our wage schedules for pre-act 10 non-represented staff. The county will be reviewing all wage schedules and job descriptions in an effort to bring consistency and continuity along with fair and equitable wages. Discussions will start this summer with the Transition Team on how to move forward with this project.

**Anyone wishing to have a specific subject discussed in a future newsletter may contact Joyce Roling at 723-2045.**

### HRA



### SESSION

**APRIL  
3RD**

- Have you received Explanation of Benefit Statements and maybe even bills for medical treatment you received in January, February, and March?
- Do you have questions or do you just want to confirm that you understand the deductible/HRA process correctly?

*It's a learning process for all of us...As promised we are here for you!*

**On April 3rd the County will be having an HRA Question and Answer Session in the County Board Room from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** You may bring your questions at whatever time is most convenient for you during this time period. We plan to have representatives available from TriCor and the Grant County Personnel Department.

Please bring any paperwork that you have received so far to help us better assist you.

*The County Board Room is located on the second floor of the Grant County Administration building, 111 S. Jefferson, Lancaster, WI*

## Thank you!



I wish to express my deep appreciation to all Grant County Staff who helped the ADRC with Clean up after the water damages on 3/14/2012.

The ADRC Board, Staff and I wish express our deep and sincere appreciation to the follow departments: IT- Staff and Interns, Orchard Manor Maintenance Staff, Grant County Maintenance Staff, Department of Social Services, Economic Support Staff for the fabulous treats, Grant County Health Department – Troy Moris, Emergency Management – Steve and Julie, Linda Gebhard and staff, and Grant County Board of Supervisors.

A special thank you to all the ADRC for their hard work during this challenging times. Grant County is a richer place because of the continued commitment its employees.

Sincerely,  
Gayle L. Mason, ADRC Director

## Disaster Safety, Planning and You!

*Submitted by Julie Loeffelholz, Grant County Emergency Management Department*

Even though April is Severe Weather Awareness Month and September is Disaster Preparedness Month, it is always the right time to prepare yourself, your home and your family for a disaster. We always hear that “this can’t happen to me” when we talk about disaster preparedness. Well, look at how many people in Grant County have been affected by disasters in the very recent past! Yes, you can be affected by a disaster or even by an emergency which could leave you unable to return to your home, hurt or ill or even could cost lives.

In Grant County, residents could be affected by natural disasters such as flooding, tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and even winter weather including ice storms. Man-made disasters are also a possibility in almost every community in the county. We have 50+ facilities in Grant County that use what are classified by the EPA as being Extremely Hazardous Substances. These chemicals are dangerous to life and to the environment and if not handled properly, can create hazardous situations. Additionally, with the number of major highways in the county including US Highway 151, State Highways 35, 61, 80, 81, 18 and 133, there is a great opportunity for a transportation accident involving chemicals. If we include the potential for dangers associated with a train derailment or a river barge accident, our chances of having a spill in or near a community is quite large. With these risks, everyone needs to have a plan at home and at work. Emergency planning information is available from Grant County Emergency Management and on the website [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

Should a disaster or major emergency strike our communities, we may turn to assistance from our emergency responders such as fire, EMS or law enforcement for an emergency response. These organizations are tasked with protecting lives and ensuring safety. After the danger has cleared, Grant County may request assistance from Regional, State or Federal resources. Since 2000, Grant County Emergency Management has brought in more than \$20 Million in disaster assistance, grants and financial help for residents, businesses and municipalities. It has provided fire trucks in communities that could otherwise not afford them. It has provided critical equipment to save lives such as defibrillators. It has been used to repair roads and infrastructure. Most importantly, it has provided a way to put families back in their homes and out of harm’s way.

The Emergency Management Department receives about 60% of the funding for the EM office from state and federal sources. The budgeted net cost to Grant County for the Emergency Management Program in 2011 was \$74,444.

# Thunderstorms

<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/media/pdf/Thunderstorms.pdf>



## Know the Terms

### Severe Thunderstorm Watch

Tells you when and where severe thunderstorms are likely to occur. Watch the sky and stay tuned to **NOAA Weather Radio**, commercial radio, or television for information.

### Severe Thunderstorm Warning

Issued when severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. Warnings indicate imminent danger to life and property to those in the path of the storm.

## What to Do Before a Thunderstorm

**To prepare for a thunderstorm, you should do the following:**

- Consider how a disaster might affect your individual needs.
- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall and cause injury or damage during a severe thunderstorm.

**The following are guidelines for what you should do if a thunderstorm is likely in your area:**

- Postpone outdoor activities.
- Get inside a home, building, or hard top automobile (not a convertible). Although you may be injured if lightning strikes your car, you are much safer inside a vehicle than outside.
- Remember, rubber-soled shoes and rubber tires provide NO protection from lightning. However, the steel frame of a hard-topped vehicle provides increased protection if you are not touching metal.
- Secure outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors. If shutters are not available, close window blinds, shades, or curtains.
- Avoid showering or bathing. Plumbing and bathroom fixtures can conduct electricity.
- Use a corded telephone only for emergencies. Cordless and cellular telephones are safe to use.
- Unplug appliances and other electrical items such as computers and turn off air conditioners. Power surges from lightning can cause serious damage.
- Use your battery-operated NOAA Weather Radio for updates from local officials.
- Remember that lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from the area where it is raining. That's about the distance you can hear thunder. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance. Seek safe shelter immediately.

**Avoid the following:**

- Natural lightning rods such as a tall, isolated tree in an open area.
- Hilltops, open fields, the beach, or a boat on the water.
- Isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.
- Anything metal—tractors, farm equipment, motorcycles, golf carts, golf clubs, and bicycles.

If you are:	Then:
In a forest	Seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees.
In an open area	Go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. Be alert for flash floods.
On open water	Get to land and find shelter immediately.
Anywhere you feel your hair stand on end (which indicates that lightning is about to strike)	Squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. DO NOT lie flat on the ground.

# Tornadoes

<http://readywisconsin.wi.gov/media/pdf/Tornadoes.pdf>



## Know the Terms

### **Tornado Watch**

Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to **NOAA Weather Radio**, commercial radio, or television for information.

### **Tornado Warning**

A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

## Tornado Facts

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate a neighborhood in seconds. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Every state is at some risk from this hazard.

Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible.

Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

The following are facts about tornadoes:

- Wisconsin averages 21 tornadoes a year.
- The peak tornado season in Wisconsin is April to August, but tornadoes can occur any time of year.
- Tornadoes can occur any time during the day or night, but are most frequent between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- About 80% of tornadoes that hit Wisconsin are relatively weak, with winds under 100 mph. Only 1% are violent with winds over 200 mph.
- They may strike quickly, with little or no warning.
- They may appear nearly transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms in the funnel.
- The average tornado moves southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction.
- The average forward speed of a tornado is 30 MPH, but may vary from stationary to 70 MPH.
- Waterspouts are tornadoes that form over water.

## What to do Before a Tornado

Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- Listen to **NOAA Weather Radio** or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- Look for approaching storms
- Look for the following danger signs:
  - Dark, often greenish sky
  - Large hail
  - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
  - Loud roar, similar to a freight train.

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

**What to Do During a Tornado**

<b>If you are in:</b>	<b>Then:</b>
A structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building)	Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.
A vehicle, trailer, or mobile home	Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.
The outside with no shelter	<p>Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding.</p> <p>Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.</p> <p>Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.</p> <p>Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.</p>

***REVISED 2012 Training Opportunities***

Please let your supervisor know if you are interested in attending any of these training sessions. The sessions are held in the County Board Room and reserved seating is appreciated by calling 723-2540.



**Training Dates:** **4/19/12**; 6/21/12; 9/20/12; 12/13/12

<b>Time</b>	<b>Title</b>
8:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	Civil Rights Compliance
9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.	Sexual Harassment Workplace Violence
9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.	FMLA Workers Compensation County Benefits in Review



# Voluntary Benefits

Grant County allows benefit eligible employees to make changes or sign up for the following voluntary benefit plans during periodic open enrollment periods. Below are each plan's contact information and a schedule showing when they will be in Lancaster to assist you.

## Representative Information

### Supplemental Insurance (cancer, disability, etc.)

**Aflac**; Linda Hudson-Bull (608)348-5650 (Changes/Enrollments are effective July 1, 2012)

**Platinum**; Desiree Gremmel (563)557-2504 (Enrollments may be done at any time)

### Deferred Compensation (retirement savings) (Enrollments/Changes may be made at any time)

**AXA Advisors**; Brian Thiet (414)226-8003

**Nationwide Retirement Solutions**; Bill Barnes (608)358-4821

**Wisconsin Deferred Compensation**; Kristy Igl (877)457-9327, ext. 7113

## Meeting Locations/Times/Dates

*(no appointment required; meetings take about 15 minutes)*

### Nationwide Retirement Solutions

May 21st 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Administration Building (Room 266)  
2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Highway Department office

May 22nd 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Community Services Building (ADRC's conference room)  
1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Orchard Manor (Room 104)

### Wisconsin Deferred Compensation

June 6th 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at the Administration Building (Room 266)  
11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the Community Services Building (ADRC's small conference room)  
12:45 p.m. to 2 p.m. at Orchard Manor (Room 104)  
2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Highway Office

### Aflac

June 7th 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Administration Building (Room 266)  
2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Highway Department office

June 8th 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Community Services Building (Social Services' large conference room)  
1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Orchard Manor (Room 104)

**Platinum** - Visit dates not available yet

**AXA Advisors** - Visit dates not available yet

## **Service Anniversaries**

*(5 year increments)*

Jeffrey Hesseling, 40 years on June 12

Christine Haas, 30 years on May 1

Lawrence Kirschbaum, 30 years on June 1

Connie Cray, 30 years on June 21

Sandra Lenz, 25 years on June 30

Jay Fitzgerald, 20 years on April 12

Mary Allen, 15 years on April 14

Lawrence Ploessl, 15 years on April 14

Linda Rech, 15 years on May 9

Lois Reynolds, 15 years on May 9

Kimberly Martens, 15 years on June 16

Ruth Shelliam, 15 years on June 23

Julie Leibfried, 15 years on June 30

Elaine Majerus, 10 years on April 1

Nancy Pennekamp, 10 years on May 7

Norma Wolf, 10 years on May 7

Kathy Clauer, 10 years on June 4

Janell Bradshaw, 10 years on June 6

Jennifer Reding, 10 years on June 6

Michelle NeCollins, 10 years on June 11

Michelle Young, 5 years on April 4

Racheal Ackerman, 5 years on May 18

Daniel Reuter, 5 years on June 4

Darcie Dressler, 5 years on June 20

Molly Jerrett, 5 years on June 20

Aaron Noel, 5 years on June 22

***Congratulations on reaching  
these milestones! Thank you.***